



April 7, 2009

Dear Colleague,

Today, White House officials will team up with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to announce a new national domestic HIV/AIDS campaign called *Act Against AIDS*. The campaign will be released at a press event scheduled for 1:00 pm EDT and Webcast live at www.aids.gov. If technical difficulties prevent the event from being broadcast live, it will be recorded and made available at a later date on this Web site. So that you are informed about these activities, this letter has information about the new campaign and some of its components, as well as where you can access information to learn more about and how to participate in the campaign.

Act Against AIDS

The domestic HIV epidemic is far from over. As referenced by CDC's "Estimates of New HIV Infections in the United States, August 2008," the HIV epidemic is worse than previously known. Further, the data confirm that the most severe impact is among gay and bisexual men of all races and African American men and women, in particular.

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/factsheets/pdf/incidence.pdf>

Yet there continues to be a sense of complacency about the epidemic among individuals and communities throughout the United States. A recent poll conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) found that the percentage of the American people who say that they have seen, heard or read a lot about HIV/AIDS in the United States has fallen from 34% five years ago to just 14% today, and the percentage of African Americans reporting this has fallen from 62% to 33%.

Act Against AIDS is intended to continue to address the urgency given these data and also the decreased attention given to the domestic HIV/AIDS crisis and the complacency that has developed in this country. The campaign recognizes that although HIV and AIDS affect some populations disproportionately, the epidemic is an issue for all people in the United States and as such, we share a collective responsibility for stopping this epidemic. It is a 5-year, multi-faceted communication campaign that is being planned and released in phases. Each phase will have its own unique objectives and target audiences and will utilize mass media and direct-to-consumer communication channels to deliver important HIV prevention messages in a manner designed to be compelling, credible, and relevant. Some campaign phases will influence knowledge and information-seeking behaviors, while other phases will influence complex prevention and testing behaviors. The campaign is designed so that CDC partners can access campaign materials for use in their state and local communities.

Nine and a Half Minutes

Every 9 ½ minutes, another person in the United States becomes infected with HIV. This resulted in over 56,000 new HIV infections in this country in 2006 alone.

The initial phase of the *Act Against AIDS* campaign, called *Nine and a Half Minutes*, will raise awareness of the severity of the domestic epidemic and includes a series of video, audio, and print materials. Beginning with two short videos for the internet, a radio PSA, an online banner, and transit ads, the campaign will deliver the simple message that every nine and a half minutes someone in the United States becomes infected with HIV.

A consumer-oriented Web site (www.nineandahalfminutes.org) will be launched at 1:00 pm EDT and will contain resources for individuals and partners who want to use these materials as part of their HIV prevention and awareness efforts.

The Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative

Africans Americans make up just 12% of the US population, but represented nearly half of the new HIV infections that occurred in 2006 and half of the more than 14,000 AIDS deaths in recent years.

To help ensure the widespread delivery of campaign messages within African American communities, CDC is implementing the *Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative* (AAALI). This \$10 million, five-year partnership with 14 of the nation's leading organizations serving the African American community seeks to harness the collective strength and reach of traditional, longstanding African American institutions to increase HIV awareness. The names of these organizations are included in the attached list. While many of the AAALI partners have longstanding commitments to addressing HIV among African Americans, the new initiative will enable each group to make HIV prevention a core component of its day-to-day activities. The AAALI is an outgrowth of CDC's prevention philosophy of empowering partners to work within their communities.

Partnership with the Kaiser Family Foundation

Because successfully reducing the impact of HIV in the United States will require action from both within and beyond heavily affected African-American communities, CDC will partner with the Kaiser Family Foundation – a leader in health policy and communications – to enlist support from the media and entertainment industries in broadly disseminating these and other HIV prevention messages.

CDC and Kaiser will establish a coalition of entertainment, print, online, and other media organizations interested in providing support to *Act Against AIDS*. There will be an emphasis on partnerships with media that are uniquely positioned to reach specific populations starting with African-Americans, given the heavy burden of HIV in this population.

For more information

CDC is very excited about the *Act Against AIDS* campaign and its associated initiatives. The multi-pronged structure of the campaign will enable us to reach multiple and diverse at-risk populations while also working on the national level to raise overall awareness of the HIV epidemic. To find out more about the campaign after 1:00 pm on April 7th, please visit

- www.cdc.gov/hiv/aaa for information about *Act Against AIDS*
- www.nineandahalfminutes.org for information on the *9 1/2 Minutes* phase, useful consumer information on the epidemic, what you can do to help end the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and tools you can use to spread the word and participate in this campaign.

In the coming weeks, CDC will be reaching out to you directly to participate via teleconference to ensure you fully understand this campaign. It is our hope that you, too, will work within your communities and within your networks to *Act Against AIDS*. Because every nine and a half minutes, right here in the United States, someone's brother, sister, father, mother, friend, co-worker, or neighbor becomes infected with HIV. We know how to prevent new HIV infections from occurring. We just need to make sure that everyone understands the importance of prevention and the importance of doing their part to stop the spread of HIV.

Sincerely,

/Richard Wolitski, Ph.D./
Acting Director,
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis,
STD and TB Prevention

List of organizations participating in the *Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative*

- 100 Black Men of America
- American Urban Radio Networks
- Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
- Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- National Action Network
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- National Coalition of 100 Black Women
- National Council of Negro Women
- National Medical Association
- National Newspaper Publishers Association
- National Association of Black County Officials / National Policy Alliance
- National Urban League
- Phi Beta Sigma
- The Southern Leadership Conference